AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A magnetic bearing element~~,~~ comprising:

~~at least one~~an annular permanent magnet~~ (2, 3)~~ divided in a circumferential direction thereof at at least one location ~~(4)~~to form a radially extending slit, the radially extending slit defined by opposing faces of the magnet~~into a plurality of segments, said segments spaced apart from one another at said at least one location~~; and

an annular binding band~~ (5)~~ surrounding said ~~at least one~~ annular permanent magnet,

wherein the opposing faces of the magnet are not in contact with each other~~wherein the plurality of the spaced apart segments are not in contact with adjacent segments~~.

Claim 2 (Cancelled).

3. (Currently Amended) The magnetic bearing element according to Claim 1, wherein the permanent magnet~~ (2, 3)~~ is divided in a circumferential direction thereof~~and spaced apart~~ at multiple locations ~~(4)~~to form multiple radially extend slits and a plurality of spaced apart segments and the plurality of the spaced apart segments are not in contact with adjacent segments.

4. (Currently Amended) The magnetic bearing element according to Claim 3, wherein the locations~~ (4)~~ are distributed regularly around a periphery of the permanent magnet~~ (2, 3)~~.

5. (Currently Amended) The magnetic bearing element according to Claim 1, wherein the bearing element comprises multiple permanent magnets~~ (2, 3)~~ arranged concentrically with one another, all of which are divided at at least one location~~ (4)~~ and spaced apart there.

6. (Currently Amended) The magnetic bearing element according to Claim 5, wherein the radially extending slit of one of the multiple permanent magnets~~locations (4) at which the permanent magnets (2, 3) are divided and there spaced apart are~~ is offset from~~ one~~ the

radially extending slit of another one of the multiple permanent magnets in the circumferential direction.

7. (Currently Amended) The magnetic bearing element according to Claim 1, wherein the annular binding band ~~(5)~~ is made from a carbon-fiber material.